

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

FEB. 25, 2010 Vol. 52 No. 7 50¢

AFGHANISTAN OFFENSIVE

Pentagon spends billions to terrorize civilians

By Deirdre Griswold

Feb. 16 — It is now four days since U.S. Marines stormed into the town of Marjah in Afghanistan, backed up by helicopter gunships, fighter jets and drones. Some 9,000 U.S. troops are taking part in Operation Moshtarak, which means “together” in the Dari dialect — a bright idea from some psyops genius meant to beguile the local population.

These U.S. troops, part of the Obama administration’s “surge” of 30,000 additional forces sent to Afghanistan, are supplemented by 4,000 British soldiers and a few thousand Afghans. So altogether you have some 15,000 troops, equipped with the most modern weapons, pitted against what the Pentagon estimated to be about 400 Taliban fighters with only handheld guns and mortars and dug-in improvised explosive devices to slow the advancing forces.

The types who thrilled to Hitler’s tank battalions rolling across the farmlands of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union would undoubtedly find this display of raw imperialist military power in Afghanistan equally stimulating. For ordinary working people around the world who are not turned on by the latest death machines, it is appalling.

In what has become a monotonous Pentagon mantra, the media repeat that everything is being done to prevent civilian casualties. In this well-publicized-in-advance campaign, the U.S. generals told the people to stay home and not risk being hurt. So why did their fighter jets bomb a building in Marjah with people inside, killing 12, half of them children?

The NATO commanders in charge also admit to another eight civilian deaths so far in the offensive in Helmand province, but shrug it off as an acceptable cost of war.

How Afghans view the ‘surge’

What kind of war is it where one side has all the tactical advantages? Where only the determination of the

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MEETING MOBILIZES TO FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL 7



Chilean leader Victor Toro and Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal spoke at the Feb. 13 teach-in.

PHOTOS OF SPEAKERS: PVN WW PHOTO: LAL ROOHEK

As states slash budgets and services

No cuts! Make banks, bosses pay

By Fred Goldstein

After six months of so-called “recovery,” massive unemployment remains and foreclosures reach new highs. Now another fundamental aspect of the capitalist economic crisis — the budget crisis — is escalating as millions of people face the loss of vital services, threatening their futures and their very survival.

Hundreds of billions of dollars are going to bankers and corporations in interest, bailouts and low-interest loans provided by the government. Hundreds of billions more are going for war and occupation. Yet states all across the country are taking the axe to budgeted social services and laying off public service workers.

In addition to the state cutbacks, the Obama administration is preparing to issue an executive order for the creation of a so-called “independent budget commission” to cut Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. The target time for the establishment of the commission is after the 2010 elections.

As reported by Workers World on Jan. 21, the economic crisis has slashed state revenues and 43 states plus the District of Columbia have carried out severe budget cuts, with more on the way. According to a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 28 states are cutting health care services; 24 are cutting services to the elderly and disabled; 36 are cutting aid

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COMMEMORATE
BLACK HISTORY
MALCOLM X



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Fight for childcare, education 3



Buffalo, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

Protests demand justice as Slain Muslim leader’s autopsy released

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

On Feb. 1 the long-suppressed autopsy of slain Muslim leader Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah was released to the public at the Dearborn, Mich., police headquarters. Imam Abdullah was killed in Dearborn, a suburb of Detroit, on Oct. 28.

The autopsy report states the imam was shot 21 times, with numerous wounds in the midsection, waist and groin areas. At least one shot was through the back. There were also numerous lacerations on his hands and forehead, presumably from the attack dog that was killed during the FBI operation.

There was much anticipation in the Detroit area prior to the release of the autopsy report. The Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice held a demonstration and press conference outside Dearborn police headquarters on the day of the release.

These actions were supported by the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality and attended by the imam’s son as well as members of his mosque, Masjid al-Haqq. Ten members of the mosque currently have felony charges pending against them in connection with FBI infiltration of Masjid al-Haqq.

MECAWI described the death of the imam as a “targeted assassination.” This quote was picked up by news agencies throughout the world, including the Associated Press, UPI, Islamonline.net and Russia Today.

On Feb. 2 another press conference, called by U.S. Congressperson John Conyers Jr., was held in downtown

Detroit. Conyers issued a letter requesting an internal investigation of the actions of the FBI field office in Detroit.

Conyers wrote in the letter to Attorney General Eric Holder that he seeks Holder’s “personal assurance that the Department’s investigation into the shooting death of Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah ... will be appropriately rigorous, thorough, and — most critically — transparent. In addition, I call for the Department’s Civil Rights Division to conduct a separate, independent review of whether the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s use of confidential informants in our nation’s houses of worship may constitute a deprivation of protected constitutional rights under 42 U.S.C. 14141.”

At the Feb. 2 press conference, the widow of Imam Abdullah was on the panel. It was revealed that federal immigration authorities are attempting to deport her from the United States. Amina Abdullah, a national of the east African state of Tanzania, has been placed on a tether.

One of the imam’s sons, Mujahid Carswell, is a defendant in the Detroit 10 case. Members of the imam’s family and mosque were victims of FBI infiltration of their group. The information supplied by the FBI lured the imam and his followers to the warehouse where he was gunned down by federal agents.

MECAWI told members of the international press on Feb. 1 that the assassination of Imam Abdullah represented a pattern of systematic harassment and persecution of Muslims in the U.S. and abroad. This assassination must also be viewed within the context of standard government policy to both neutralize and liquidate effective leadership emanating from the oppressed African-American community. □

Farmworkers fight firings, harassment

By **Kathy Durkin**

The year is 2010. Yet discrimination against and exploitation of the workers who grow and harvest our food supply continues today and in its vilest forms — against immigrants and women.

When a young woman farmworker was sexually harassed and abused at a Giumarra Vineyards Corporation facility in Edison, Calif., her co-workers came to her aid and objected to her treatment.

The day after they reported the incident, the company retaliated against the woman and her supporters by firing all of them. They are all Indigenous people who traveled from Mexico to toil in these fields for their economic survival and that of their families.

The United Farm Workers union reports that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has just filed a lawsuit against Giumarra Vineyards “for violating federal law by sexually harassing a teenage female farmworker” and retaliating against farmworkers who witnessed the abuse and reported it to company officials. (ufw.org)

Giumarra Vineyards Corporations is the largest U.S. grape-growing company, with 2,500 employees. The workers pick one out of every 10 bunches of grapes in this country. Giumarra/Nature’s Partner is one of the

biggest global table-grape-producing companies, distributing and marketing fruit and vegetables from all over the world.

This voracious, capitalist enterprise carries out rampant abuse of its workforce to maximize profits and quash any resistance. For several years, Giumarra workers in the U.S. have been working with the UFW to win a union contract to stop this agro-industrial giant from mistreating its employees and to protect the workers’ basic human rights.

The UFW explains: “The company has a long history of intimidating and bullying workers and violating their rights” Not only did the company interfere with a union election in 2006, but the UFW says, “Two farmworkers died of heat-related causes while laboring in Giumarra’s fields.” (ufw.org)

The UFW is circulating an online petition and asks supporters to sign it and send it out as widely as possible. It defends the woman worker who charged harassment and her supportive co-workers and demands an end to sexual harassment and retaliation against workers who protest their horrific working conditions and who support the UFW. Visit ufw.org to sign on.

A delegation of women leaders will present the petition to Giumarra/Nature’s Partner and try to meet with company representatives in February. □

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Rhode Island

Protests defend public education, support March 4 national action

Bill Bateman
Providence, R.I.

Attacks on public education in Rhode Island are coming one after another. Gov. Donald Carcieri proposed \$125 million in cuts to education and services this year and proposes to cut \$162 million next year. Providence, with the state's largest school system, has lost \$5.8 million in state funding for its 24,000 students in the last two years and will lose \$7.1 million next year.

The Providence School Department unveiled a proposal to close seven schools. In a series of six public forums in January and February, 500 parents, students, teachers and concerned community members turned out. One hundred people took the microphone and spoke to oppose the school closings. Not one person supported the idea.

Hope High School's turnaround and progress since being put into receivership in 2005 — through hiring more teachers and advisors, and going to 90-minute class blocks — are now in jeopardy of being reversed.

The closure plan is seen as a way to keep students packed into oversized classes. Teachers from various schools explained that more students per school will also deprive students of the spaces needed for physical education and the special areas needed for quality music and art classes.

The Rhode Island Unemployed Council pointed out that Providence has an official unemployment rate of 14 percent, and that some of the 11,000 unemployed should be put to work fixing the schools. It said that federal stimulus money is explicitly targeted for repairing schools and hiring more teachers.

High school student tells 200 supporters he wants his school kept open.



WW PHOTO: BILL BATEMAN

The school superintendent of the city of Central Falls presented an ultimatum list of six demands to the teachers union. The teachers said they were willing to sit down and talk but they would not be forced into anything by bullying tactics. The superintendent then said all teachers and staff would receive layoff notices and only 50 percent would have a chance of being rehired next year.

In response to these attacks, the S.O.S. — Save Our Schools — Coalition was formed. Its goal is to defend public education in Rhode Island and fight for

safe, secure buildings, up-to-date books, quality resources and equipment, smaller class sizes, and appropriate and specific spaces for art, music, science, etc.

On March 4 — the National Day of Action to Defend Education — the S.O.S. Coalition together with the Rhode Island Unemployed Council will march for jobs and education. A rally will take place from 3 to 4 p.m. at the Providence School Department headquarters at 797 Westminster Ave. A march downtown will start at 4 p.m. and end with a rally at 5 p.m. at Providence City Hall. □

Day care cuts protested



By Beverly Hiestand
Buffalo, N.Y.

Working mothers and their children, unionized day care workers and community supporters, outraged by slashed day care subsidies, marched and rallied in protest Feb. 9 in downtown Buffalo, mobilized by the religious group VOICE-Buffalo and an outspoken county government representative from the inner city, Betty Jean Grant.

Over 100 protesters weathered the cold, windy and snowy day to march to the County Office Building, where they stood below the offices of the Social Services Department and the County Executive chanting demands for reinstatement of day care subsidies.

Millionaire county executive, Chris Collins, and his administration decided that the subsidies that have made day care affordable for many families are too expensive for county taxpayers. In December, almost without warning, the rules were changed to eliminate subsidies for over 1,100 children — four in 10 of those who were covered last year. Parents were given only a 10-day notice.

This was met with a shocked outcry from the community, and the county was forced to extend the deadline to 30 days. Parents were told to find alternative arrangements.

Mothers protested that even that amount of time was ridiculously inadequate. Many noted they needed day care because they did not have other resources for caring for their children as they worked or went to school to attain job skills. Others spoke about how they are portrayed as not wanting to work, which is just not true,

yet their efforts are sabotaged when day care support is taken away, making reliable care for their children while working or going to school impossible. They chanted “90 days” over and over, and demanded more time to find the money.

Sympathetic women county legislators representing the poorest districts have revealed that there are surplus county funds that could be used to cover subsidies until other sources can be found. Legislator Maria Whyte said there is unanimity in the legislature to delay the cuts. Collins, however, refuses to use the surplus funds. He and the powerful corporate forces behind him have been under fire not only from working mothers but also from many other county residents who are suffering from the impact of cuts to services that are not mandated by state or federal bodies. This includes closing down the last two health care clinics in inner-city poor neighborhoods.

Fewer and fewer people here believe that

there's not enough money for the services people need. Instead, most are talking about the huge transfer of tax money to the banks. People are also very aware of the county and city tax funds that are repeatedly directed to Lake Erie waterfront development for big business and expensive condos, even during this deep recession.

Protest signs on the march reflected the struggle between these rich corporate forces and those representing the needs of working and poor people. Mothers and children carried signs such as, “Cuts hurt our children” and “Invest in our children's future.” Voice-CSEA, the Voice of Organized Independent Childcare Educators, showed that there is common interest between those who need day care and those who provide it. They held up the In-



WW PHOTOS: LESLIE FEINBERG

Buffalo protest against cuts in early childhood education.

ternational Action Center's sign that said, “No to more cuts! Unite to fight for programs we need.”

Several protesters carried signs saying, “Cuts = Lost Jobs.” Youth members of People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH) brought out supporters. Other activists demanded, “Our tax dollars for our needs, not big business!” and noted, “Big bucks for developers never trickle down.” Protesters from the International Action Center and the Bail Out the People Movement pointed out that there is enough money for day care, jobs and all human needs. □

Ohio students sit-in for LGBT rights

By Caleb T. Maupin
Cleveland

John Carroll University in University Heights, Ohio, was recently the site of a protest for lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgender rights. The university was founded in 1886 as St. Ignatius College by members of the Society of Jesus, a Roman Catholic order commonly known as “Jesuits.”

The Jesuits are sometimes referred to as “God's marines” due to their role in helping in the conquest of Native peoples. In addition to the thousands of soldiers and slave traders who traveled the world enslaving Indigenous people for the colonial empires of Europe, this religious order went along as well. The Jesuits reinforced the oppression of Indigenous peoples, often with forced conversions to Roman Catholicism and brutal repression of Native religions and practices.

The Jesuits also took part in the brutal “counterreformation” movement in Europe, where moves away from feudalism, absolute monarchy and Catholic theocracy

were put down with violence and torture.

John Carroll University is run by this archaic religious order, though it is also a center of leftist activity, including struggles against repression in Latin America, illiteracy in the U.S. and for health care reform.

There was anger among the students when university president Robert L. Neihoff declared that “traditional Catholic moral teaching properly locates sexual activity within the relationship of a man and a woman united for life through marriage as husband and wife.” This explicitly anti-LGBT language was released as a supplement to the university's nondiscrimination policy.

In addition to making this condemnation of LGBT people, the statement offered no protection for the LGBT community in its discrimination policy. In October 2008 the faculty voted “very strongly” to change the policy to include LGBT persons. The college defended the exclusion. Vice President Jonathan Smith said the university “strives to achieve a much higher standard based upon its Je-

suit and Catholic mission and teachings.” (cleveland.com, Feb. 13)

On Feb. 4, 15 students took action. As half time of a basketball game between John Carroll and its historical rival Mount Union College was about to end, the students walked onto the court. They sat down at midcourt, waving rainbow LGBT liberation flags and holding signs demanding protection of the LGBT community from discrimination.

When confronted by college officials, the students defiantly held their ground until finally being removed gradually by the police. The response of the crowd was mixed as some booed, yet others cheered in support of the students' civil disobedience. Video of the protest has circulated on the Internet, drumming up more support for the students.

In response, the administration met the following week with over 200 faculty and students who oppose the bigoted language of the president and the lack of protection for LGBT students. Many are hopeful that the policy will finally be changed as a result of the students' action. □

Another NYC hospital in peril

Community rally demands ‘Save St. Vincent’s!’

By Dolores Cox
New York

In the Greenwich Village section of Manhattan, a 162-year-old hospital fights to remain open. On Feb. 10 the Coalition to Save St. Vincent’s Catholic Hospital and Medical Center held a community forum at Service Employees International Union Local 32-BJ headquarters. More than 300 people attended. Other rallies and town hall meetings were also held during the prior couple of weeks.

It was recently learned that St. Vincent’s Hospital is slated to be closed in a proposed takeover. The hospital is \$700 million in debt. Because of staff and community protests and appeals to the state, Gov. David Patterson has just loaned the hospital \$12 million. GE Capital has also put up money to keep the hospital open. These monies, however, are expected only to keep the hospital out of trouble through the end of February.

Among the speakers at the forum were forum moderator and Community Board 2 chairperson, Jo Hamilton; Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer; Public Advocate Bill DiBlasio; City Council members Mary Chin and Christine Quinn; City Comptroller John Liu; Kevin Finnegan, SEIU Local 1199 political director; Jessie Blumenthal, head of St. Vincent’s Trauma Center; and Dr. Xavier Jiminez, SEIU, representing the hospital’s interns and residents.

Also speaking were Eileen Dunn, president of the nurses union at St. Vincent’s; John Hilton, nurse and co-chairperson of the Nurses Association; Dr. Mike Wayne, surgeon; paramedics and Local 1199 Emergency Response Team workers; a New York State Senior Action Com-

mittee representative; some former patients; and community residents.

The urgency of the situation was stressed throughout the evening. What’s at stake, it was stated, is the integrity of the city’s health care system. The hospital’s closing will set a precedent of making the most vulnerable in society suffer, namely the poor, elderly, uninsured, homeless and mentally ill. St. Vincent’s is also considered to have a vanguard HIV/AIDS program, with nothing comparable nearby.

It was noted that closing St. Vincent’s will cut the medical care safety net if there is no massive protest against it. It was emphasized that coalition building is needed between unions, staff and elected officials. A lot of anger was expressed about why the proposed closing is happening. The closing will cause a ripple effect and put a strain on the resources of other parts of the city. St. Vincent’s is considered the litmus test for the future of health care in the city.

Several speakers emphasized the ongoing need for the Level One trauma center in that part of the city. The distance to other trauma centers and previous closings of other hospitals means the closing of St. Vincent’s would be a matter of life or death. St. Vincent’s trauma center, it was noted, is known worldwide since the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center, because it treated the first responders. It was also stated that St. Vincent’s treated survivors of the Titanic sinking and the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire.

It was emphasized repeatedly that the community must rise to the occasion, step up the fight and take to the streets when necessary. Health care has become a business, it was

noted, but people won’t stop getting sick or injured. This is about saving jobs as well as protecting the community, many said.

It was stated that the government must invest in St. Vincent’s. Mention was made that if AIG and other corporations were considered “too big to fail” and entitled to a bailout, then a full-service hospital like St. Vincent’s should be saved too.

It was disclosed at the forum that behind-closed-door agreements were made on Feb. 5 to close the trauma center, emergency room and behavioral science clinic and to no longer accept new patients. But the power of staff and community protests thwarted the secret deal, at least for now. Keeping up the pressure, staying focused and remaining strong were emphasized. It was noted that no responses on this issue have been made by Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Two days after this meeting the hospital announced that 32 doctors had been laid off. In addition, all executives will be taking a 25 percent pay cut; directors, managers and physicians will take a 20 percent pay cut. All other nonunion workers will either take a pay cut or be laid off by the end of February. The hospital says the pay reductions are only temporary, but necessary because of its financial situation.

Staff morale is reportedly low, but they are willing to make sacrifices if necessary in order to keep the hospital open. Doctors, nurses and managerial staff say they’ll work side by side with union members.

“Keep fighting!” “Save St. Vincent’s!” “Save our jobs!” were the rallying cries repeatedly shouted out throughout the forum. □

On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

Borax workers fight lockout

After 500 members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 30 who work the Borax mine in Boron, Calif., owned by Rio Tinto unani- mously rejected a contract offer that would have changed seniority rules, the company brought in re- placement workers on Feb. 1. The mine is the largest open-pit mine in California and the second-largest borax mine in the world. Rio Tinto, a London-based mining giant with operations on five continents, wants to hire nonunion workers and change the se- niority system so it can promote people based on skill and performance rather than just years of service. The union says the proposed changes will lead to nepotism. “I think the company had the impression we were going to roll over and let them feed us the poison,” Jim Freeman, who has worked at the mine for 31 years, told the Feb. 1 Los Angeles Times. A solidarity rally is planned in Boron on Feb. 16.

Continental ground workers join Teamsters

Continental fleet service employees — baggage handlers, ramp workers and cargo agents — voted to join the Teamsters union on Feb. 12. Teamster offi- cials say that their winning strategy included holding major rallies at Continental hubs in Cleveland, Hous- ton and Newark, N.J., as well as organizing activities at other airports around the country. The Teamsters built upon a 2008 unsuccessful attempt to organize these 7,600 workers, who remained one of the largest groups of nonunion workers in the airline industry. No wonder the Teamsters called this win “a big vic- tory.” (New York Times, Feb. 13)

Migrant workers win \$2.75 million settlement

More than 2,200 migrant workers from Mexico and Central America, who planted pine seedlings throughout the Southeast, won a class-action settle- ment worth \$2.75 million on Feb. 12. Superior For- estry Services, which hired them under the federal guest worker program, was charged with paying the workers less than the minimum wage and not paying them for all the hours they worked. The Southern Poverty Law Center led the team which filed the law- suit in 2006 to win justice for the workers. (Associ- ated Press, Feb. 13)

Reuters reporters make news

On Jan. 29 Reuters reporters and supporters were making the news instead of covering it as they demonstrated outside Reuters offices in Washington, D.C. Responding to Reuters’ declaration on Jan. 19 of an “impasse” over contract negotiations, the protest- ers chanted, “Impasse, my ass!” reported Union City, the online daily newsletter of the Metro Washington AFL-CIO. (Feb. 1) Reuters announced the day before that it was going to start imposing new working conditions that will mean more work and effective pay cuts of at least 10 percent. The union noted that Reuters’ actions are “especially hypocritical” in light of the company’s profitability and the CEO’s \$36 mil- lion pay package in 2008. The Newspaper Guild of New York represents 110 Reuters workers in D.C. and over 400 across the country; the rally was supported by the Washington-Baltimore Guild.

S.F. Labor Council supports organizing in the South

The San Francisco Labor Council unanimously passed a resolution on Feb. 8 that both commemo- rates the 10th anniversary of the historic victory of the Charleston 5 and extends solidarity to the Jobs with Rights Now campaign, which seeks to organize and defend workers in the South. Initiated by Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the resolution recounts the successful struggle to free five members of International Longshoremen Association Local 1422 — four Black, one white — who had been charged with inciting-to-riot felonies after 600 cops charged their lawful picket line and brutalized the workers on Jan. 19, 2000. As the resolution notes, “[T]his historic victory serves as a model for all who seek economic and social justice in our nation.” □

Health care is a right!

Judging from the number of police assigned to follow demonstrators on Feb. 8 at New York’s Port Authority bus terminal, the de- mand for universal health care must be very dangerous. After being told they couldn’t stay inside with signs or chants or fliers or cameras or speakers, the group, organized by Private Health Insurance Must Go, marched around the outside of the busy transporta- tion hub with fists in the air. Their T-shirts got a warm reception from commuters. PHIMG has also taken its message to bustling Grand Central Station, and will continue to have monthly demonstrations.

— Report and photo by Anne Pruden



“**Low-Wage Capitalism** by Fred Goldstein is a most timely work, as the working class prepares for a fightback during the greatest crisis of capitalism since the Great Depression.”

Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10 and Co-chair, Million Worker March Movement

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“With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that.”

—Howard Zinn, author of
A People’s History of the United States

Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Colossus with feet of clay:
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

As states slash budgets and services

No cuts! Make banks, bosses pay

Continued from page 1

to higher education. More than 132,000 state and local government workers have been laid off and hundreds of thousands more jobs are on the chopping block. The crisis has left the 50 states with projected total shortfalls of \$350 billion for the years 2010 and 2011.

The CBPP has now updated its study — “Governors’ New Budgets Indicate Loss of Many Jobs if Federal Aid Expires” — to warn about the coming year: “States confront an estimated \$180 billion budget gap for fiscal year 2011, which begins July 1, 2010, in most states.”

This date should become a deadline for mass mobilization across the country to stop the planned attacks from coming down.

Hitting seniors, children, the sick and disabled

As an example of the cuts, Arizona’s governor plans to eliminate the state’s children’s health insurance program, which covers 47,000 children, and repeal Medicaid coverage for more than 310,000 adults with low incomes and/or serious mental illness.

Mississippi would cut funding for K-12 schools by more than 9 percent and close four state mental health clinics. Hawaii plans to eliminate a program providing cash assistance to low-income people who are elderly or have disabilities; the state also plans large layoffs of state workers.

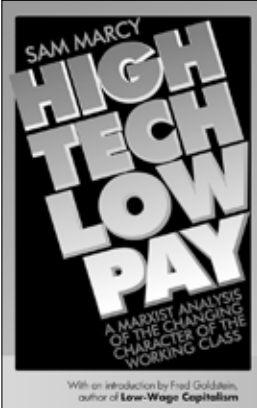
California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is proposing deep cuts to health care, education, the state workforce and human service programs, beyond the draconian ones already in force. The cuts include reductions in Medi-Cal (Medicaid), a \$1.5 billion cut in K-12 schools and community college funding, a 5 percent cut in state workers’ salaries, a reduction in monthly grants to low-income people who are elderly or have disabilities, and elimination of cash assistance for very poor families with children.

New York Gov. David Paterson is proposing \$1.1 billion in cuts to state education; more than \$400 million in reduced payments to health care providers and \$100 million in other health-care cuts; \$143 million in funding cuts for four-year public colleges and cuts to a financial program serving students from low- and moderate-income families; and elimination of state revenue-sharing aid to New York City and other localities.

HIGH TECH, LOW PAY

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy, Second Edition with a new introduction by Fred Goldstein



Twenty years ago Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women and Black, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and other nationally oppressed workers. Using Marxism as a living tool, Marcy analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of **Low-Wage Capitalism**, explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Available at www.Leftbooks.com

Massachusetts proposes to eliminate \$174 million in Medicaid provider rates, restorative dental services for 200,000 adults and state funding that provides housing vouchers for the homeless. All these cutbacks fall the very hardest on the African-American, Latino/a, Middle Eastern, Asian and Native communities, which were already in near-depression status before the economic crisis. It also greatly spreads and intensifies the suffering of undocumented workers. This is just a sampling of the types of planned cuts across the 50 states. They come at a moment when poverty and deprivation are escalating due to unemployment, foreclosures and evictions. Public services are needed more than ever at the very moment they are being destroyed by heartless government officials.

Bankers demand ‘austerity’ — for workers, not themselves

These officials are acting on orders from the bankers and bondholders who want to make sure that the state governments don’t default on their loans and that interest payments keep flowing to bolster profit margins. Social services, public education, subsidized medical care, cash assistance to the poor and many other benefits have been fought for and won over the decades. The purpose of these services is to protect sections of the working class from the harshest features of capitalism and its system of exploitation and oppression. Even in so-called “normal” times, the ruling class is always trying to cut back on social services. Beginning at the end of the Carter administration and continuing through the Reagan years and Clinton regime (which destroyed the welfare system), this trend has been steadily advancing.

In the present economic crisis not only are the bankers and bosses laying off workers in the millions, but they want to cut back even more on those very services that would cushion the hardships. With massive unemployment and the shrinking of the capitalist economy, government revenues have declined drastically. A fundamental feature of the present economic crisis is that the capitalist governments, not just in the states and not just in Washington but all over the world, have to hold up the capitalist system. The bosses and the bankers are useless as far as getting masses of workers back to work. So the capitalist government has given tax breaks, bailouts and subsidies to the capitalists while having to provide some assistance to the workers in the form of extended unemployment insurance, food stamps and other subsidies to keep them from starving. The underlying cause of the present economic crisis is capitalist overproduction on a massive, global scale. So the capitalists, from the owners of the auto industry to the technology industry to the construction and housing industry, are shrinking the economy.

The creation of new value — real value created by workers, not fictitious, purely paper value created by speculators, stock brokers, hedge fund managers, etc. — is lagging. Income in wages is declining. Thus taxes collected from workers and businesses are declining, along with state revenues. But the capitalists are the ones shutting down the factories, laying off the workers, lowering wages, forcing millions to work

part time, foreclosing on homes, etc. The bosses and bankers are responsible for this economic crisis. When their governors cut budgets, it is to try to make the workers pay for this crisis. Meanwhile, trillions of dollars flow out of the public treasuries in the form of bank bailouts and unlimited funds to the military-industrial-banking complex for conquest, death and destruction. This adds up to trillions in bank bonuses and profits for stock brokers and speculators. The banks and corporations make huge profits off the exploitation of workers and then cry for government help when it looks like those profits may be whittled down. There is a budget crisis and the question boils down to which class created the crisis and which class is going to pay. The rich capitalists created this crisis and this tiny minority of parasites who live off the people should pay to keep disaster from falling on tens of millions of workers and on the communities in which they live. It will be very educational for the workers in this country to pay attention to what workers in Greece are doing about a similar budget crisis. The Greek government owes hundreds of billions of dollars to bankers around the world, especially in Europe but also in the U.S. — including the bandits at Goldman Sachs. Many European countries share a common currency, the euro. The world’s bankers, headed by the German ruling class, are demanding that the Greek government solve its budget crisis by cutting back on public workers’ pensions and salaries, extending retirement age and so on.

One third of workers in Greece are government workers.

One third of workers in Greece are government workers.

‘Not one euro to be sacrificed to the bankers!’

The Greek working class has a very militant history of class struggle and has won many concessions from the Greek capitalists. Now the bankers in Europe and the ruling class in Greece want to destroy those concessions on the basis of bringing down Greece’s budget deficit.

The answer to this argument was given in a massive one-day strike on Feb. 10 that shut down most of Greece. A reporter was on the scene of a mass demonstration and wrote the following:

“[T]he government’s proposals for deep spending cuts to rein in the deficit have met significant resistance.

“‘We won’t pay for their crisis!’ voices amplified by loudspeakers blared from Klafthmonos Square. ‘Not one euro to be sacrificed to the bankers!’” (New York Times, Feb. 12)

And a few days before the strike, Panagiotis Vavougiotis, the 80-year-old head of the powerful, 200,000-strong retired civil servants union, told the Times: “It is not the workers that should be blamed for this; it is bankers and large capital. We will take to the streets.”

This message should reach the labor movement here and all progressive forces in the community, on the campuses and in high schools, throughout the anti-war movement. The cutbacks must be stopped; services must be restored; layoffs must end. Not one dollar for the bankers! Let the rich pay! □

Help to publish: ‘What is Marxism all about?’

World View Forum is publishing this guide for activists, which explains Marxist terminology in non-technical language. Terms like “imperialism,” “self-determination” and “socialism” are defined and illustrated. The Marxist definitions of these words help sharpen an understanding of society from a working-class perspective.

The book that was first published in the 1970s as a pamphlet, has been revised, updated and edited by young activists in Fight Imperialism, Stand Together — FIST. It gives relevant analysis about the conditions faced by millions of people in capitalist society today, as the economic crisis hits working and oppressed people, including students and youth.

It is also a guide to action. This book is a must-read for students and youth organizers involved in the many struggles going on today across the country. Its short, concise chapters make it very usable as an organizing tool as well as for discussion groups, classes and meetings.

FIST organizers are committed to getting this new edition of “What is Marxism all about?” to student and youth activists nationwide. Your help is needed! All aspects of writing, editing, proofreading, cover and book design were done by voluntary labor. However, printing and binding costs are high, causing us to turn to readers and activists for financial support.

Your contribution to print this book will make a difference! Everyone who donates \$20 or more will receive a copy of “What is Marxism all about?”

Yes! I want to help with publishing costs.

Here is my donation of ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$20 \$ ____ Other (Write checks to World View Forum)

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COMMEMORATE BLACK HISTORY

Malcolm X’s legacy lives on 45 years after his a

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Forty-five years ago on Feb. 21, Malcolm X — El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz — had begun his address to a mass meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity in New York City at the Audubon Ballroom when several men opened fire on him with shotguns and pistols, killing him.

At the time the corporate media framed the threats, attacks and assassination of Malcolm X as a feud between the Nation of Islam under Elijah Muhammad and former members of the organization who were led by Malcolm X. Yet it has been well documented that the membership of the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X were all under FBI and local police surveillance.

The FBI wanted to cause a rift between Malcolm X and the members of Elijah Muhammad’s family in order to weaken the impact of these organizations on developments within the broader African-American struggle.

Malcolm X’s assassination came at a critical point during the African-American political movement of the 1960s. The Nation of Islam’s newspaper, Muhammad Speaks, had done a superb job in covering developments within the civil rights movement from 1961 to 1963, but had remained largely aloof from the direct action efforts of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and other organizations.

The program of the NOI called for the creation of a separate state for African Americans in the United States or in Africa. The organization felt that based on the legacy of racism and national oppression it would be impossible for Blacks and white people to be integrated into the same society on an equal basis.

After the April 1962 police attack on the NOI mosque in Los Angeles that resulted in the killing of NOI member Ronald Stokes and the wounding of several others, Malcolm X wanted to engage in broader political efforts to seek justice in the case. City authorities found the killing justifiable. Differences between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad over the character of the NOI’s response to the killing of Stokes, coupled with the burgeoning mass movement for civil rights, increased tensions inside the organization.

When the Ku Klux Klan bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., in September 1963, killing four African-American girls, Malcolm X’s statements became even more militant in response to this act of racist terrorism and the failure of the John F. Kennedy administration to take effective action in support of civil rights.

Consequently, when Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, and Malcolm later made comments at the Manhattan Center on Dec. 1 that Kennedy’s death was a case of “the chickens coming home to roost,” he was silenced by Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm would eventually leave the organization by March 1964.

Following his departure from the NOI, Malcolm formed two other organizations, the Muslim Mosque Inc., a Sunni Islamic organization, and the Organization of Afro-American Unity, a pan-Africanist group patterned on the Organization of African Unity, in an effort to build a united front in the U.S. in solidarity with the struggle for independence and unity on the continent of Africa.

Malcolm X: A transformative figure in African-American history

Building on the legacy of Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X emerged during the 1950s as a leader within the Nation of Islam and a militant spokesperson for urbanized African Americans in the U.S. Born to Garveyite activist parents Earl Little and Louise Little in 1925, Malcolm’s exposure to nationalist and pan-Africanist thought began at a very early age.

Malcolm was one of seven children in the Little family. His father Earl, a Baptist minister, often carried him to the mass meetings he attended during the depression years of the 1930s. His father was originally from Georgia and his mother Louise had been born in the Caribbean nation of Grenada. (The Autobiography of Malcolm X)

Malcolm’s parents had originally met at a Universal Negro Improvement Association-African Communities League conference, the organization founded by Marcus Garvey, in 1919 in Montreal. They were leading members of the UNIA-ACL. Louise Little’s articles were often published in the Garveyite newspaper, The Negro World.

Despite the economic crisis facing the U.S. at the time, Malcolm’s family, a close unit, remained self-reliant. The nationalist mood and self-pride exhibited by this family caused tremendous hostility among racist whites in Nebraska, where Malcolm was born. Malcolm and other family members believed that Earl Little was murdered by white racists in 1931 in Mason, Mich., near the state capital of Lansing.

The social pressure from the white power structure in the area around Lansing, Mich., and economic isolation precipitated a nervous breakdown for Louise Little. Her eventual commitment to a state mental hospital and the breakup of the family by the welfare department had a tremendous impact on the Little children.

During his primary school years Malcolm exhibited intellectual capabilities and talents. He dreamed of being a lawyer but was discouraged by a racist teacher who told him that he had to be realistic because he was Black. By 1941, Malcolm had relocated in Boston to stay with his older sister, Ella Collins, the daughter of Earl Little from a previous marriage.

Malcolm worked in menial jobs in pool halls and on transport trains during World War II. He eventually drifted into criminality and drug abuse that resulted in his arrest and sentencing to prison for burglary in 1946.

While in prison he was influenced by an older inmate to read and develop his mind. He then set out to learn as much as possible and to participate in the prison debating teams.

Malcolm soon accepted the teachings of the Nation of Islam at the urging of his brothers, who had entered the organization prior to him. When he was paroled in 1952, he immediately began to work as an NOI organizer under Elijah Muhammad’s leadership.

He rose swiftly through NOI ranks to become the Boston and later New York minister during the mid-to-late 1950s. After he gained national exposure through public speaking and media coverage, the press once again set out to discredit another fearless spokesperson for the African-American masses.

Malcolm X created a newspaper for the Muslim organization, Muhammad Speaks, which as with the Garvey movement proved to be a powerful vehicle for the transmission of the NOI’s ideas to the general public. In addition, Malcolm’s radio and television interviews and debates drew national attention from both the African-American masses and from U.S. political police agencies like the FBI.

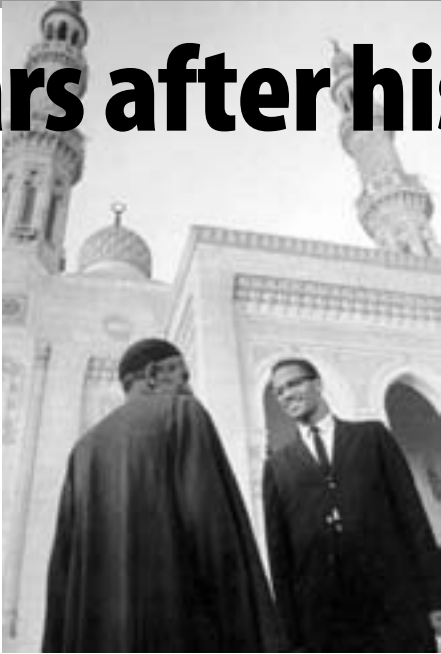
By 1963, Malcolm X’s speeches had become more decisively political and secular. He began to de-emphasize certain aspects of Elijah Muhammad’s Black Muslim theology. His remarks at a mass rally held during a grassroots organizers’ conference in Detroit in November 1963 reflected his developing world outlook.

In this address, which was recorded and issued under the title, “Message to the Grassroots,” Malcolm X said, “The same man that was colonizing our people in Kenya was colonizing our people in Congo. The same one in the Congo was colonizing our people in South Africa, and in Southern Rhodesia, and in Burma and in India, and in Afghanistan, and in Pakistan. They realized all over the world where the dark man was being oppressed, he was being oppressed by the white man; where the dark man was being exploited, he was being exploited by the white man.” (Malcolm X Speaks, 1965)

In March 1964 Malcolm announced the formation of an orthodox Muslim Mosque that would rival the NOI and arranged to make hajj in April to Saudi Arabia in order to authenticate himself as a Sunni Islamic believer. When he returned to the U.S. in May 1964, he then established a political group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity, whose objectives were decisively revolutionary nationalist and pan-Africanist in orientation.

In July 1964, Malcolm departed again for Africa and the Middle East to engage in further study, analysis and research and to establish deeper contacts between the OAAU and other revolutionary movements in the so-called Third World. Although many writers have placed emphasis on his conversion to Sunni Islam, Malcolm never lessened his commitment to the revolutionary transformation of the U.S. and the world.

Malcolm spent the bulk of his time between July and November of 1964 in various revolutionary and progressive states in Africa, including Egypt, Ghana, Algeria, Tanzania and Guinea. He developed close political relations with Kwame Nk-



rumah of Ghana, Ahmed Sekou Touré of Guinea, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Abdul Rahman Mohamed Babu, a leading government official and Marxist theoretician from Tanzania.

It was Malcolm’s connections with Babu that resulted in Malcolm’s meeting with the Cuban revolution leader, Che Guevara, during Guevara’s visit to the United Nations in late 1964. Malcolm took a keen interest in Cuba and Che’s role in Cuba’s pending aid to Congo’s revolution during 1965.

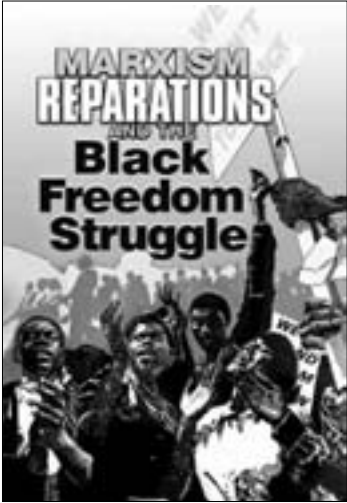
Malcolm had been one of the most outspoken critics of U.S. foreign policy towards Congo during 1964, when the Johnson administration had intervened to halt the advances of the revolutionary forces. These revolutionaries were fighting against the Western-backed forces that had overthrown and assassinated Patrice Lumumba in 1960-61.

Malcolm’s public statements became more anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist in character and many believed that had he lived longer, Malcolm would have advanced socialism as a political objective.

Malcolm X also visited England and France during late 1964 and early 1965. In England he made alliances with organizations within the Black and Islamic communities. In France, he embarked upon efforts to form alliances with expatriate Africans and Caribbean nationals residing in Paris. Just before his assassination, the French government prevented his making another visit, apparently in response to U.S. State Department pressure.

During this period Malcolm began to emphasize the central role of women in the national liberation process. In an interview in Paris he told the public, “One thing I became aware of in my traveling recently through Africa and the Middle East, in every country you go to, usually the degree of progress can never be separated from the woman. If you’re in a country that’s progressive, the woman is progressive. If you’re in a country that reflects the consciousness toward the importance of education, it’s because the woman is aware of the importance of education.”

Malcolm continued, “But in every back-



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

- Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes
- Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy
- Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell
- The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead
- Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights and Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad

Assassination Int'l teach-in builds support for Mumia Abu-Jamal



ward country you'll find the women are backward, and in every country where education is not stressed, it's because the women don't have education. So one of the things I became thoroughly convinced of in my recent travels is the importance of giving freedom to the woman, giving her education, and giving her the incentive to get out there and put that same spirit and understanding in her children. And I frankly am proud of the contributions that our women have made in the struggle for freedom, and I'm one person who's for giving them all the leeway possible because they've made a greater contribution than many of us men." (By Any Means Necessary, p. 179, 1970)

Malcolm X's secure position in African-American history

Despite the efforts of the corporate media to distort his legacy and international image since his assassination, Malcolm X has been immortalized by many writers and commentators on African-American affairs. According to journalist M.S. Handler, "No man in our time aroused fear and hatred in the white man as did Malcolm, because in him the white man sensed an implacable foe who could not be had for any price — a man unreservedly committed to the cause of liberating the Black man in American society, rather than integrating the Black man into that society." (El Hajj Malik Shabazz, documentary film)

During the later years since his martyrdom Malcolm has gained a secure position within the collective consciousness of Africans, oppressed peoples and workers worldwide. His image proliferates in the urban areas of America and his name and spirit are often evoked in relation to the uncompromising character of the African-American struggle for total liberation from national oppression and economic exploitation.

Consequently, the efforts of the mass media, U.S. intelligence services and the capitalist class in general have failed to obscure or co-opt his message due to the efforts of the political heirs of Malcolm X, who have continued to maintain the integrity and principled character of his legacy. □

Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of slavery, sharecropping and segregation
Consuela Lee

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior
Mumia Abu-Jamal

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion
John Parker

Racism and Poverty in the Delta
Larry Hales

Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions
Pat Chin

Books available at Leftbooks.com, and in bookstores around the country

By Audrey Hoak
Philadelphia

Activists from Philadelphia, across the U.S. and around the world participated in a video conferencing and live teach-in Feb. 13 to take up the next stage in the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. The hall at the Abiding Truth Ministries Church was full despite nearly 50 inches of snow that hampered public transportation and put parking in the city at a premium.

The resounding message from all fronts was to keep the pressure on and fight harder than ever before to free Abu-Jamal.

Pam Africa of International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal opened the event by reminding people that we overturned the death penalty for Mumia under Gov. Tom Ridge and now we must do it again. She stressed the need to educate people, particularly youth, about this case and its relevance to the struggle for Black Liberation and against the death penalty.

Journalist and Temple University professor Linn Washington Jr., who has been investigating this case since the day of Abu-Jamal's arrest on Dec. 9, 1981, said, "The focus shouldn't be whodunit, but on exactly how corrupt the proceedings have been starting with police and judicial misconduct and courts that have consistently ignored their own laws and rulings, creating what is now called the 'Mumia exception' for those standards which apply to everyone but Mumia."

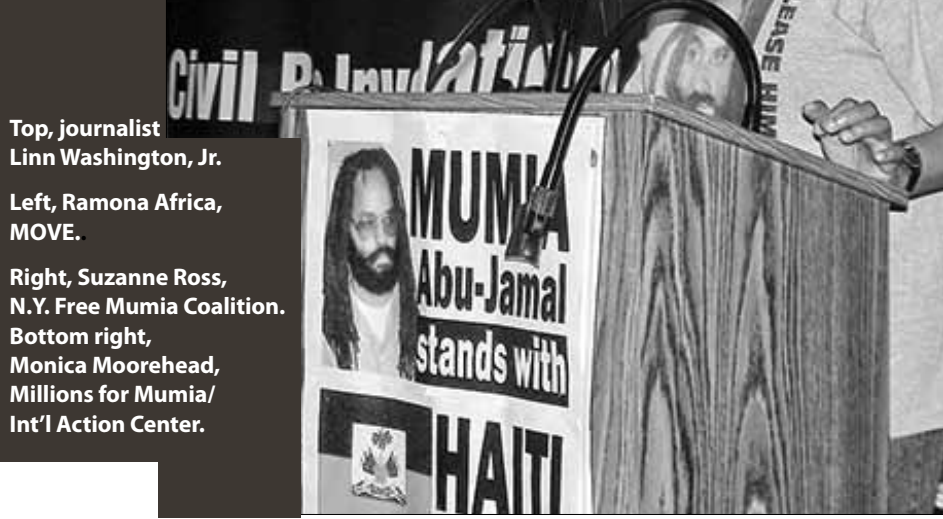
Washington noted, "If not for the fact that Abu-Jamal's very life is at stake and the many future cases that hinge on its outcome, the state's antics would be laughable. But they are deadly because Abu-Jamal is a revolutionary facing execution who has become the symbol of justice to people all over the world."

Many refuse to stand by and let the state take his life. Ernesto Luisa, an Afro-Venezuelan leader in Caracas, Venezuela, called in to extend support for Abu-Jamal and for the eradication of the death penalty, which is so often applied to African Americans. Luisa demanded the Justice Department listen to the international community regarding this case.

Unable to join the session by phone, Abu-Jamal sent a message read by Johanna Fernandez of Educators for Mumia, who had visited him that morning. He said, "This is an intense time for me and for all of us. It's a time to struggle more, not less. As you know, in my case law isn't law and precedent is not precedent. I encourage you to look at Amnesty International's case for me and ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE!"

Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General and a founder of the International Action Center, sent a statement, saying, "Don't fail or falter, we need maximum effort now. We stand no chance to dump U.S. militarism if we can't save Mumia."

Speakers addressed how Abu-Jamal's life is threatened because he defends those in prison and speaks out against the U.S. wars against Afghanistan and Iran, military bases in Colombia, the coup in Honduras and the U.S. invasion of Haiti. His is a voice for the survivors of



Top, journalist Linn Washington, Jr.

Left, Ramona Africa, MOVE.

Right, Suzanne Ross, N.Y. Free Mumia Coalition. Bottom right, Monica Moorehead, Millions for Mumia/Int'l Action Center.

WW PHOTOS: LAL ROOHH

Hurricane Katrina, on behalf of Palestinian people, in solidarity with Cuba, and against attacks on immigrants and other forms of racism and legal lynching.

Nana Soul of Black Waxx Recordings and Artists & Activists United for Peace streamed in with a poem telling Mumia that he cannot be extinguished or contained.

While citing that courts are not the answer, Ramona Africa, one of only two survivors of the state's murderous attack on the Philadelphia home of MOVE in 1985, described plans to use the courts as a tool to keep the pressure on the authorities. To mark the 25th anniversary of the Osage Avenue bombing on May 13, Africa and the MOVE organization will be filing murder complaints with District Attorney Seth Williams against those responsible for the death of their family members.

The program was dedicated to the late Veronica Jones, who courageously stood up to menacing cops and a threatening judicial system when she recanted a false statement forced out of her to incriminate Abu-Jamal. Her sister, Valerie Sundail, reported that Jones wrote a book that will soon be released.

Time to act is now

Various proposals for action were raised at the event. One prong in the fight is to demand a civil rights investigation as well as an investigation into the role of the federal COINTELPRO program that targeted Abu-Jamal since he was a young student activist. Petitions addressed to

both U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and to President Obama will be followed up with a phone campaign to congressional leaders on Feb. 26 and in-person meetings on April 26.

Miya Campbell of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together was streamed in from Boston. She encouraged people to come out, teach and make Mumia accessible to everyone. FIST is proposing the formation of Students and Young People for Mumia, and will raise Abu-Jamal's case during nationwide student actions March 4.

Plans are also underway to raise Abu-Jamal's case at the upcoming U.S. Social Forum in Detroit in late June and for demonstrations in Philadelphia July 3 and again on July 4 when President Obama will be in town.

A solidarity message from incarcerated human rights lawyer, Lynne Stewart, was read by her partner, Ralph Poynter. Despite health problems stemming from her incarceration, Stewart insisted the case for Mumia needs to come before everything and everybody, and stressed that people need to act, not just plan or pledge. Poynter acted by raising \$400, which he delivered in person to Pam Africa.

A highlight of the program came when Victor Toro, a Chilean leader who faces deportation, said, "Mumia is a symbol and an extraordinary man. He is a 21st century Mandela. His resistance is that of immigrant people. Social activists of South America join to get Mumia out of jail. He is ours." □

U.S. reinforces occupation as Haitians mourn, rebuild

By G. Dunkel

Haiti remains a country devastated by the Jan. 12 earthquake. The disaster has been successfully used by the United States as a pretext for reoccupying the country with thousands of military troops.

On Feb. 12, Haiti mourned its dead. Tens of thousands came out to the ceremonies in Port-au-Prince at the ruined National Palace.

The mourning was made heavier because tens of thousands of the dead were tossed, unidentified, into mass graves. The Haitian government estimates the death toll at 213,000. Thousands of the living are amputees, facing a hard life made harder because of the loss of a limb. Over a million Haitians are now homeless in the cities devastated by the earthquake — Port-au-Prince, Petionville, Carrefour, Jacmel, Leogane and Petit-Goave. Hundreds of thousands have fled to cities not touched by the earthquake, where they are living doubled up with family and friends, scrambling and scraping to survive.

Even as Haitians grieve, rebuild and struggle, the country is occupied by 20,000 U.S. troops that do little to help the population.

Food is still in short supply, but the United Nations' World Food Program appears to be getting enough distributed so nobody is starving to death. Many Haitians complain of graft, corruption and insensitive incompetence in its opera-

tion and food being used as a tool to force the hungry homeless to go to where the authorities want to send them. (Publico, Feb. 5)

Epidemics of diarrhea, flu, scabies, ringworm and many other preventable diseases are raging throughout the makeshift camps that are estimated to be home to more than 300,000 people in the capital alone. People in these camps have scant water, which means no baths, no sanitation, no latrines and no way to dispose of their garbage.

A few maquiladora shops have opened, but getting supplies in and product out is dicey. The U.N. has hired a few thousand Haitians to clear the streets and remove tottering buildings. However, some estimates put the unemployment rate at 70 percent before the earthquake. (National Public Radio, June 14) Saying it has gotten "significantly worse" means almost nobody has a job.

Adding to the desperation, the U.S. Coast Guard returned 78 Haitians who were seized near the Bahamas in an overloaded sailboat. A Coast Guard spokesperson said there was no sign that more Haitians than usual were fleeing by sea, but it had still stepped up patrols. (AFP, Feb. 12)

The USS Bataan has arrived in Haitian waters. (Haiti-Liberté, Feb. 10-16) Although the Pentagon has both denied and admitted that the Bataan is outfitted as a floating prison to be used outside the U.S., the Guardian (U.K.) has established

that it was previously anchored in the Indian Ocean and used to hold prisoners from Afghanistan.

According to the Washington Post (Jan. 22), the 20,000 or so members of the U.S. armed forces currently in Haiti are operating under an agreement with the U.N. to "oversee all Haitian air and sea ports, and to help secure Haitian roads." They also have "broad scope to intervene in civil disturbances, subject to a request by Haitian authorities." They will, however, operate under their own "autonomous" command structure.

This agreement appears to put Haiti under a U.N. and U.S. protectorate.

But Haitians, no matter how desperate their situation, have not remained passive. Some of them are going through collapsed buildings, salvaging metal reinforcement, lumber and furniture to reuse or resell.

When about an inch of rain fell on Feb. 11 around 4:30 a.m., the first response was wails of helplessness and misery. Then anger at the U.N. and the René Préval government took hold and spontaneous, large demonstrations began marching to U.N. headquarters and the Haitian government's headquarters, both located near the airport, which is currently a U.S. base. (Kevin Pina, www.haitiaction.net, Feb. 11)

The protesters chanted, "If Aristide was here, he would be soaked along with us." They also chanted that they had nothing

to keep off the rain and that they needed tents. They confronted the Haitian cops who came out to stop them. There was some pushing and shoving, but no injuries resulted.

There have been a number of earlier demonstrations at the government's current headquarters, which is the former headquarters of the judicial police. On Feb. 5, when Bill Clinton and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon came to visit Préval, a group called PLONBAVIL came out to demand that aid be given to the true victims of the earthquake. The organization includes a number of former public employees in the telephone company, the ports and so on, who were illegally laid off.

Berthony Dupont, the editorial director of Haiti-Liberté, points out, "Indeed, the finishing stroke that the country received Jan. 12, despite the immense suffering of the people, seems to be a good thing for a group of speculators and mercenaries in the pay of the occupiers. That's the reason why the imperialists' aid never reached the masses of the people."

Those in the U.S. in solidarity with the people of Haiti must continue to demand that U.S. troops be withdrawn immediately, that exiled and democratically elected President Bertrand Aristide be allowed to return, and that the Haitian people be able to rebuild their country free from imperialist domination and military occupation. □

Dresden 65 years after firebombing

Human blockade keeps neo-Nazi marchers out

By John Catalinotto

Progressive residents of Germany won a victory as 12,000 people used their bodies and their organization to blockade a neo-Nazi march in Dresden, a major city in Saxony, located on the Elbe River in the southeast of the country near the Czech border. It was a welcome triumph not only over the fascists but over the German government which was prepared to defend the neo-Nazi marchers.

The fascists had chosen Feb. 13 for their march for a special reason. It was the 65th anniversary of when U.S. and British bombers had dropped so many incendiary bombs on the center of this German city that it created a firestorm, sucking out all the air and burning or suffocating between 35,000 and 70,000 German civilians.

The neo-Nazis wanted to take the legitimate grievance over this war crime and make it their issue. It's to the credit of the German anti-fascists that they joined together — 600 organizations and 2,000 individuals supported the Dresden-based coalition — and came from all over the Federal Republic to physically stop the Nazis.

The success required both a country-wide mobilization and a political struggle against those who simply wanted to make a symbolic protest, that is, to protest the neo-Nazi march but not confront it. The anti-fascists succeeded in both areas. "It wasn't easy," said Lena Roth, spokesperson for the Dresden anti-fascist coalition. "We took casualties from Nazi attacks and



PHOTO: GABRIELE SENFT

Anti-Nazi blockade, Dresden, Germany, Feb. 13. Banner reads: 'Never again fascism! Never again war!'

it was icy cold, but it was worth it." (German daily Junge Welt, Feb. 15)

A stream of Twitter messages that Workers World followed showed how the anti-fascists coordinated their actions to block the Nazi march into Dresden. A favorite signoff on the site was "Dresden Nazifrei, no pasaran," meaning "No Nazis in Dresden, they shall not get in."

Young workers played a major role in the anti-fascist blockade. Ringo Bischoff, federal youth secretary of the service workers union ver.di, stated: "The ver.di youth is committed to an anti-fascist program and will also in the coming period remain active against Nazis and rightist ideologies in the factories and the union." (Junge Welt, Feb. 15)

The role of the government, which mobilized thousands of police to protect the fascist marchers, boomeranged. Support for the counterdemonstration grew after people found out that the state in Saxony

would allow a major fascist march to take place. As anti-fascist Joachim Guilliard from Heidelberg told Workers World, "There was one bus from here going to Dresden. But when people found out what the government was doing, the organizers had to hire two more buses."

The chairperson of the Union of Victims of the Nazi Regime, Heinrich Fink, said, "The successful blockades have impressively shown that in the struggle against the old and new Nazis we can rely only on ourselves, and not at all on the state regime or the police or the courts." (Junge Welt, Feb. 15)

Dresden: Feb. 13, 1945

Dresden is known for its art museum, the bridges across the Elbe and the brutal fire-bombing as World War II drew to a close. Germany's neo-Nazi movement has no right to seize Dresden's history as its issue. At the time, there was little protest

of this brutal slaughter of civilians that was a common event in the war waged by imperialist forces — on both sides — and in which Germany's Nazi-led military reveled.

Except that it was home to Germans, Dresden was the least likely military target. Its population had doubled as German civilians from the east ran before the advance of the Soviet Red Army. The British and U.S. military fire-bombed Dresden because it was a military experiment they could get away with. In addition, it was a show of force and ruthlessness to the Red Army, as later on, in an even more dramatic and inhuman way, were the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan.

For readers who are unfamiliar with the firebombing of Dresden, perhaps the best way to learn of it is to read "Slaughterhouse Five," the novel by Kurt Vonnegut, who himself was a prisoner of war, forced to work underground in Dresden when the bombing took place. A factual description might leave one numbed by numbers, while Vonnegut's novel makes vivid the charred logs that were the remains of tens of thousands of civilians.

The imperialist politicians who ordered Dresden's destruction are gone, but their successors in the Pentagon and the British military are now carrying out a slaughter of civilians with newer weapons in the mountains and valleys of Iraq and Afghanistan. What is the current offensive on Marjah, Afghanistan, but another war crime? Neither the Nazis nor the "democratic" imperialists should be allowed to get away with war crimes. □

Regime change in Honduras brings more repression

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

On Jan. 27 Jose “Pepe” Lobo was inaugurated as the new president of Honduras. His inauguration was the product of illegitimate elections held under a coup d’état, with pervasive repression of the opposition forces and with only 30 percent of eligible voters participating in the elections.

The inauguration ceremony was held in a stadium that holds 35,000 but was almost empty. Only three other heads of state attended: Ricardo Martinelli from Panamá, Leonel Fernández from the Dominican Republic and Ma Ying-jeou from Taiwan. Colombia, Peru, Malta, Japan and the United States sent representatives.

The resistance, led by the Popular National Front of Resistance (FNRP), filled the streets with more than 300,000 people who marched to show their opposition and non-recognition of the new government. They also bid farewell to their beloved legitimate leader, President Jose Manuel Zelaya. After four months housed

in captivity in the Brazilian Embassy, Zelaya would fly to the Dominican Republic accompanied by the president of that country.

In a moving ceremony, resistance leader Juan Barahona received the legitimate presidential sash from Zelaya. In his speech, “Honduras has changed forever,” Barahona laid out the tasks ahead for the resistance: organizing, mobilizing and formulating ideology in order to strengthen the resistance “as the instrument of the peoples’ power for the conquest of power.” This, said Barahona, must be done in a very unified way and inclusive “of all the exploited, oppressed and marginalized of our nation, with no exception whatsoever.” (www.redaccionpopular.com)

The new Lobo government has started as a furiously repressive one, similar to the fascist Álvaro Uribe regime in Colombia. In fact, Uribe was the first president to visit Lobo after his inauguration, in order to sign security cooperation agreements. Other treaties have since been signed by the two countries in matters of defense, surveillance, terrorism, kidnapping, drug

trafficking, etc. Colombian paramilitaries have been operating in Honduras in coordination with the country’s army and police. They were invited by the previous, fraudulent Micheletti government, of which Lobo’s regime is the continuation.

Illustrating the repressive character of the new regime and its declaration of war against the resistance, several peasants from the Unified Peasant Movement of Aguán were shot and injured by army and police on the day of Lobo’s inauguration.

On Feb. 2, two videographers who cover the resistance were temporarily abducted and tortured. The following day, the body of 29-year-old union leader Vanessa Zepeda was found after being disappeared and tortured. On Feb. 10, Edgar Martínez, his spouse, two brothers and a friend were temporarily kidnapped and tortured. Two women were raped.

On Feb. 11, two men raided the home of Porfirio Ponce, resistance leader and vice-president of STYBIS, the beverage industry workers union whose Tegucigalpa headquarters serves as the resistance’s main office. The men took Ponce’s

computer and spilled blood on his bed as a warning. Ponce was in charge of hosting an International Action Center solidarity delegation to Honduras from the United States in October.

Hermes Reyes, member of the Artists Movement in Resistance, was temporarily disappeared and tortured on Feb 12. Three days later, Julio Fúnez Benítez, an active member of the resistance and the Union of Workers of SANAA, the National Service of Water and Sewage Systems, was shot dead by two paramilitaries on a motorcycle.

This is the government that the United States recognizes as “the road to democracy” in Honduras, just like it does with paramilitary president Uribe in Colombia.

Despite this criminal repression, the resistance is determined to prevail. Their slogan is “¡Resistimos y Venceremos!” (We resist and we will win!) It is the task of all progressive people around the world to follow the direct request of the resistance: Expose these crimes and refuse to recognize the government of Pepe Lobo.

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South American countries give concrete aid to Haiti

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

The Union of South American Nations — UNASUR — held an emergency meeting on Feb. 9 in Quito, Ecuador, to examine the situation in Haiti after the earthquake and make plans for short- and long-term assistance to the destroyed nation. Exterior ministers and special envoys from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guyana, Surinam, Uruguay and Venezuela and the presidents of Colombia, Paraguay and Peru joined current UNASUR President Rafael Correa from Ecuador and Haitian President René Préval.

This meeting took place 11 days after Correa visited Haiti to personally assess the situation. He was accompanied by the Health and the Risk Commission Secretaries (both women) and a delegation of physicians, rescue workers, experts in clinical and intensive therapy and in the management of natural disasters, and specialists in plastic, vascular and emergency surgeries.

UNASUR’s integral plan

These countries, many of them rich in natural resources but impoverished by centuries of colonialism and neocolonialism by the countries of the North, particularly the United States, unanimously agreed to help in the reconstruction of Haiti in the three main areas proposed by Préval: infrastructure and energy, agricul-

ture and health. Their work will be fully coordinated and approved by the government and the people of Haiti. “They will tell us about the progress that we make and the needs that they have,” stated Correa. (TelesurTV.com, Feb. 9)

Some of the concrete actions will include providing materials, machinery and engineers to work on infrastructure, particularly in the construction of roads and electrical networks, plus studying the impact of gas as an alternative source of energy. The countries will provide specialists, seeds, fertilizers and other resources for the reconstruction of the agricultural sector. They will supplement the actions already implemented by the South American Health Council and help in joint actions to funnel humanitarian aid and reconstruction coordinated by the Haitian government.

These measures are in addition to providing other necessities such as tents and the construction of emergency shelters as well as the development of a reforestation program.

UNASUR is also encouraging its member states that have not yet done so to apply special processes to regulate the migratory status of Haitians in their countries, assist in the educational sector, temporarily eliminate any tariffs to Haitian export products, stimulate investments by South American enterprises that use local Haitian labor, and cancel

any Haitian external debt.

In what Correa described as “South-to-South cooperation,” UNASUR approved \$100 million for aid, and will request an additional \$200 million in a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank, to be paid, not by Haiti, but by the UNASUR countries in a 15-to-20-year repayment plan with minimum interest.

In another show of solidarity from the South, the ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas) countries, of which Ecuador is also a member, recently decided to cancel any debt that Haiti held with their countries.

Migratory amnesty signed by Ecuador

To ease the lives of undocumented Haitians living in Ecuador, President Correa signed a decree on Feb. 9 legalizing their migratory status. In addition, those Haitians who arrived in Ecuador before Jan. 31 will receive their immigrant visa completely free. These measures will legalize the status of 15,000 immigrants from Haiti. This will also help to open the doors to their families who are still in the Caribbean nation.

Another kind of ‘relief’

On Jan. 25 a very different kind of meeting was held in Montreal, Canada, concerning relief for Haiti. With the United States and Canada leading the “Group of Friends of Haiti,” a dozen other “do-

nor” countries, including Japan and the European Union, joined this conference to “contribute to establishing a clear and common vision within the international community for the early recovery and longer-term reconstruction of Haiti.” (www.international.gc.ca)

The conference was also attended by representatives of the main imperialist financial institutions that strangle Haiti with debt — the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. There was no mention of debt forgiveness or how debt has kept Haiti from moving forward.

On Feb. 5 Representative Maxine Waters introduced legislation in Congress to relieve Haiti’s debt by requesting that “the upcoming \$100 million loan from the IMF be given to the Haitian government in the form of a grant.”

According to standwithhaiti.org: “Haiti’s \$709 million debt to the international financial institutions breaks down as follows: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), \$447 million; International Monetary Fund (IMF), \$165 million; International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), \$58 million; World Bank, \$39 million.”

The Montreal conference called for “urgently convening” an international conference of key donors and partners to be held at the United Nations in New York City in March.

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Protest wants aid, not occupation for Haiti

Despite rain and wind last Jan. 25, at least 150 local Haitians and their supporters rallied during evening rush hour at the famous Powell & Market Cable Car Turnaround in downtown San Francisco to “Stand with Haiti.” Organized by the Haiti Action Committee, speakers called for true solidarity with the plight of the Haitian people since the catastrophic Jan. 12 earthquake, demanded that Haiti’s legitimate President Jean-Bertrand Aristide — who U.S. operatives kidnapped in a 2004 coup and is now exiled in South

Africa — be brought back. The demonstrators called for emergency food, water and medical aid, and not foreign military armed occupation.

Local Haiti Action Committee member and trade union activist Dave Welsh sang a few inspiring songs and spoke about additional actions taking place that week to stand with Haiti.

Pierre Labossiere, co-founder of the Haiti Action Committee, said: “U.N. troops have been firing rubber bullets at Haitians ... while food and aid are not

getting distributed.” He reminded the crowd of “Haiti’s rich mineral resources, like gold, copper, silver, uranium and oil, that profit-motivated foreign companies ... have always enriched themselves with, at the expense of the cheap labor extracted from the Haitian people, like beasts of burden ... as shops are closed in the U.S. and go to Haiti, for slave wages.” Labossiere concluded his remarks with:



“Stand with the people of Haiti; we are all Haiti, Haiti is us!”

— Report and photo by Joan Marquardt

Cuba and Haiti

Many people think it is human nature to be greedy, to put the interests of the individual before the common good — in a word, to live in a dog-eat-dog society. At the same time, they may be moved by suffering and want to help others but usually find themselves stymied. Hey, that’s capitalism, what can you do about it?

Such an outlook leads to a pretty bleak view of the future of humanity.

The media, especially the tabloids and shock jocks that pitch their message to a mass audience, love to dish up examples of the most selfish and destructive behavior. At the same time, they avoid like the plague reporting on societies where socialist revolutions have made it possible for there to be serious planning and development that bring out the best in people.

Take Cuba, for example, and what it is doing to help the people of Haiti recover from the horrible wounds caused by the recent earthquake. If you live in the United States, you won’t read or hear about it in the media. But Cuba is doing more to provide its neighbor Haiti with medical help than any other country in the world.

Many Cuban medical personnel had been working there before the earthquake in facilities set up to treat the poorest people, often in the countryside, but were home on vacation. On news of the disaster, they rushed back, bringing emergency equipment with them.

By early February, Cuba’s International Henry Reeve Medical Contingent was the largest medical relief operation in Haiti, with 1,147 trained medical personnel there — including 411 non-Cuban graduates of Havana’s Latin American Medical School (ELAM), which provides a free medical education to students who agree to use their skills to help the poor in their home countries. Of those, seven were from the United States, two from Nicaragua and 402 from Haiti. Another 200 Havana-trained doctors will have joined this large team by late February, coming from 24 different countries.

Cuba’s Minister of Public Health, Dr. José Ramón Balaguer, presides over a system that provides everyone in Cuba with free, quality medical care. At a ceremony in Havana for the departure of the ELAM teams, Balaguer emphasized the long-term responsibility of the young physicians and their Cuban partners to “help build a public health system

that meets the needs of all the Haitian people.”

This is no quick fix, but a long-term program to help develop and train a public health system run by the Haitians themselves.

What is the price tag on all this? Nothing. Cuba leads the way in international solidarity.

ELAM was started in 2005. Since then, it has graduated 7,290 physicians from the Americas, Africa, the Mideast, Asia and Oceania. Immediately following the earthquake, its graduates began e-mailing former classmates and recruited hundreds willing to serve in Haiti.

According to a report from Medical Education Cooperation with Cuba, which helps students from the U.S. attend ELAM, the graduates now volunteering to work in Haiti have come from South America, the Caribbean and North America and as far away as Mali in Africa. Dr. Bechri Ahmed Ali hails from the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic: “But Haiti is where I belong right now.”

“This isn’t an adventure. This is a commitment,” said Dr. Wilberth Barral, a Bolivian ELAM graduate preparing to depart for Haiti. “My classmates are Haitian. Some lost their whole families, fathers, siblings, their homes. They need our help.”

Is it possible to foresee a world in which the people of the United States could help repair the damage done by centuries of colonialism and imperialism, could gladly pay reparations to those nations whose people were kidnapped for the infamous slave trade, whose infrastructures have been destroyed in Pentagon wars, whose labor has been stolen, and whose lands, water and even air have been polluted by profit-hungry U.S. corporations?

There can be such a world. Even now, when the grip of capitalist rule and ideology is so strong, more than half the people in the U.S. contributed to relief efforts for Haiti in its hour of need. The great crime is that the Pentagon dominates the U.S. presence in Haiti, occupying the country and even obstructing medicines from getting past the U.S.-controlled airport in Port au Prince.

Cuba before its 1959 revolution was a playground for the rich and a bloody dictatorship for the poor. That socialist revolution liberated the people from cynicism and despair. It can happen here. □

AFGHANISTAN OFFENSIVE

Pentagon spends billions to terrorize civilians

Continued from page 1

population to resist the invaders keeps the outsiders from completely taking over the country?

No matter what cozy labels U.S. and British military planners attach to their hideous offensives in order to “win the hearts and minds” of the Afghan people, it isn’t working.

A well-informed article in the British newspaper Guardian on Feb. 16, called “How Afghans see Operation Moshtarak,” says international coverage of this military push “is in sharp contrast to the way it is regarded on the ground in Afghanistan.”

The writer, Nushin Arbabzadah, is an Afghan woman who grew up in Kabul. She reports that the opposition newspapers, which regard the government of Hamid Karzai as illegitimate after an election riddled with fraud, have “belittled the operation, casting doubt over the strategic importance of Marjah and Nade Ali, and highlighting the issue of civilian casualties there.”

Her article also summarizes the main points in an interview with Mullah Abdul Rezaq Akhund, identified as the Taliban commander in Marjah. It was conducted in Pashto and posted on the Cheragh Daili website.

Mullah Akhund put forward four reasons why the NATO forces considered Helmand province of geostrategic importance and therefore had chosen it for their well-publicized offensive. Reporter Arbabzadah characterizes these as “conspiracy theories,” but adds that “Mullah Akhund’s views reflect those of a majority in Afghanistan.”

According to the Guardian reporter, “The Taliban commander alleged that the U.S. and the U.K. intend to set up surveillance centers along the border to collect Iranian military and intelligence data. Akhund further alleged that since Helmand is also close to Gwadar, a Pakistani port which is of economic significance to China, controlling Helmand allows Washington to curb the influence of its main economic rival in the region.

“He then went on to allege that the U.S. and the U.K. were also interested in taking control of the drug production laboratories located in Helmand in a bid to profit from the international heroin business. The fourth reason, as alleged by Akhund, is Helmand’s uranium resources. In the Taliban commander’s own words: ‘According to eyewitnesses, British forces are bringing a large amount of equipment to the area and have started extracting ura-

nium there and British transport planes land and take off from this area several times every day.’”

What this shows is that, while the imperialist militaries may enjoy enormous technological advantages, the resistance in Afghanistan is neither insular nor ignorant of what is going on in the world. While U.S. politicians have used semi-religious terms, like “evil-doers,” to provide some rationale for the war, this Taliban commander is pointing out material reasons why the imperialists are trying to control the region.

Workers in the U.S. and Britain — and Afghanistan too — are being forced to cough up the money for this war. Unlike the resistance fighters, who seem invisible because they dress and look like the people, the troops “surging” around Marjah look like they are landing on the moon, so swaddled are they in protective armor and encumbered with all the things that soldiers from an alien country need to survive — from water and food to night vision equipment, not to speak of weapons and ammunition.

And it all costs — big time. At a time when bridges are falling down in the U.S., the Pentagon is buying portable ones strong enough to hold armored vehicles as they cross the canals that crisscross Helmand province. It’s another piece of equipment the grunts have to carry with them as they “surge.”

How many school buses can be bought for the price of a light armored vehicle? The Army has signed a contract for 2,131 LAVs, adding up to \$4 billion. That’s almost \$2 million apiece, or the equivalent of nearly 30 school buses every time one of these wheeled tanks gets blown up in Afghanistan.

Congress added \$160 billion to the fiscal year 2010 Pentagon budget for Overseas Contingency Operations — about half of it for the war in Afghanistan. The drain of imperialist wars on the economy is bleeding all social programs in the U.S. — which is especially painful in this period of high unemployment and low wages, when tens of millions of workers and their families need every bit of help they can get.

Several opportunities are coming up for the anti-war, pro-people movement in the U.S. to carry out its own “surge”: the March 4 demonstrations of students and youth against cutbacks and tuition hikes; the March 20 anti-war protests; and the April 10 March for Jobs in Washington. Be there! Stop the wars and occupations!

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Protestors tell Schwarzenegger ‘Terminate foreclosures’

More than 50 people who have either lost a home through foreclosure or are facing foreclosure took a bus from Los Angeles County to Sacramento on Feb. 10. The predominantly Latino/a and majority women caravan demanded that the governor immediately respond to the foreclosure crisis by declaring a state of emergency in California.

A state-of-emergency declaration is required by the California Emergency Act whenever the safety and health of a significant number of its residents are in jeopardy, and the local and state governments are ill-equipped to deal with such a crisis.

A letter was presented to both state Assemblyperson Pedro Nava and to a staff

person for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

During a packed meeting in assembly chambers, after hearing testimonies of the brutal nature of evictions due to foreclosure — with sheriffs sometimes aiming their guns at children — state Assemblyperson Nava pledged he would sign on to a demand for the governor to issue an immediate declaration of a state of emergency.

No such pledge was given from the governor to protesters lined up outside of and knocking on his office doors. After about 20 minutes, realizing protesters weren’t going anywhere in spite of a growing police presence, a staff person came out to accept the letter from protesters.



When Schwarzenegger did finally come out of his office hours later, to speak at an unrelated press conference, some of the activists who remained waiting for him quickly began chanting, “Terminate foreclosures.” Not even flexing a muscle, he turned to the chanters, grimaced and

quickly fled, without even uttering “I’ll be back.”

The protest was initiated by Herman-dad Mexicana Trans-Nacional, the International Action Center and Bail Out the People Movement.

— Report and photo by John Parker

Euro-bosses try to make workers pay for Greece's debt crisis

By G. Dunkel

The elected leaders of the 16 countries of the euro zone gathered in Brussels, Belgium, on Feb. 11 and said they would work to prevent Greece from defaulting on its debt. By Feb. 14, they made it clear that their intention is not so much to bail out the Greek government but to pressure it into making a direct attack on the Greek working class.

The European big bourgeoisie gathered in Brussels to prevent any possible collapse of the euro, and to assure that the cost of the debt crisis was placed on the shoulders of the workers — in Greece and in the rest of the euro zone.

European Union President Herman Van Rompuy said, “We call on the Greek government to implement all these [austerity] measures in a rigorous and determined manner to effectively reduce the budgetary deficit by 4 percent in 2010.” (CNN World, Feb. 14)

At a televised cabinet meeting on Feb. 12, Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou criticized the plan to “help” Greece as “timid” and late. The plan is supposedly designed to help Greece pay off the big European banks that hold its debt and get new loans. Greece has a debt of 53 billion euros, now equivalent to about \$71 billion, coming due this year.

Along with the dominant U.S. dollar and the Japanese yen, the euro is one of the world's major currencies. The euro zone consists of the 16 countries in the EU that use the euro as their currency. The big capitalists and bankers of Western Europe created the EU and the euro zone so they could strengthen the hand of European capital against the European working class and the oppressed nations of their former colonies.

Germany, France, Italy and Spain are the countries in the euro zone with the biggest economies. Greece is also a member,

but one of the poorest. Besides Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Spain and even Italy face a sovereign-debt crisis, that is, the inability to pay debt service on their sovereign debt. A sovereign debt is one contracted by selling bonds the government issues, especially in a currency other than the one the government can print, such as a Greek government debt in U.S. dollar- or euro-based bonds.

Shares in euro zone banks had slumped as the sovereign-debt crisis developed, with Greek banks falling by more than 50 percent.

Greek workers refuse to submit

The day before the Feb. 11 Brussels meeting, 500,000 Greek civil servants went out on a one-day strike. In Greece, civil servants include teachers, doctors, air traffic controllers, and many other workers who keep the country running. A major slogan of the workers on strike was, “It's not us who should have to pay for this crisis.” (l'Humanité, Feb. 10).

Maria Ioakimidou, a middle-aged social worker at an Athens hospital said, “After 20 years on the job I only earn 1,300 euros [a month] and now the government wants to steal from me. The big guys who stole in the past [through corruption] should be paying,” she added, referring to Greece's rich elite. (Financial Times, Feb. 11)

On Feb. 11, Athens' taxi drivers — a major part of that capital city's transportation system — struck for a day over high fuel prices. Meanwhile, Greek farmers strengthened their blockades of roads along the border with Bulgaria to express their continuing outrage at the government. They have been blockading on and off for a month.

Before the Brussels meeting, Papandreou's government had announced an austerity program that includes freezing civil servants' salaries and cutting bo-



Banner in Athens reads, 'We're not paying' for the debt.

nuses and stipends. It includes raising the average retirement age by two years to 63 and hiking taxes. For every five civil servants who retire, the government is going to hire only one replacement. This means speedup for the remaining workers.

The Greek workers, with Communist leadership in the PAME labor confederation, have a well-deserved reputation for combative responses to attacks on their living standards. Europe's big capitalists also fear that a successful mass movement in Greece could inspire similar struggles in Portugal and in Spain, Italy or Ireland, where similar “reforms” are in the works.

Sovereign debt and German tutelage

Since the Greek government no longer controls Greece's money supply — it uses the euro, not a national currency — it can't devalue its way out of this economic crisis. Devaluing currency is the traditional cure for a government in financial distress. The Greek regime, however, plans instead to drive living standards for

its workers down so far that it creates an “internal devaluation.”

It appears likely that the European Central Bank or EU commissioners, with technical assistance from the International Monetary Fund, will have monitors or examiners in every department and major office of the Greek government to make sure that the budget guidelines that Papandreou's government promulgated, under intense pressure, are followed.

The ECB is already asking for even more intense austerity. Germany is the dominant financial power in the euro zone and its bankers will have the most influence with the “monitors.”

Athens is on a very short leash, since there is to be a mid-March interim progress report, a further one in mid-May, and quarterly updates thereafter.

Both industrial production and retail sales have been falling since the middle of 2007 (Financial Times, Feb. 6), so it is very unlikely that Greece is going to be able to export its way out of the crisis. □

Ukraine voters say no to NATO

By Heather Cottin

Viktor Yanukovich, who has declared his opposition to joining NATO, won the recent presidential election in the Ukraine. He defeated Prime Minister Yuliya Tymoshenko, who was a leader of Ukraine's pro-Western “Orange Revolution” in 2004.

Yanukovich says that Ukraine “will join no military alliance. This is the Ukrainian people's position, which we should respect.” (Novosti, Jan. 18) Viktor Yushchenko, the previous president, who was openly pro-NATO, came in last in this election with only 3 percent of the vote.

Months of anti-NATO protests last year in the former socialist state resulted in Ukraine's Parliament blocking the presence of foreign troops.

Yanukovich hinted that he wants to renew the contract that allows Russia a base in Ukraine for its Black Sea fleet. He also promised to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia — which U.S. client state Georgia invaded last year and Russia defended. (Guardian [UK], Feb. 14)

The “Orange Revolution,” an orchestrated regime change financed by George Soros' Open Society Foundation and the National Endowment for Democracy, had promised prosperity for the former

Soviet republic. It failed to deliver.

Last November the “Orange” government, losing support by the minute, came up with a ploy to try to postpone the elections until May of this year, citing fear of the H1N1 flu. (Itar-Tass, Nov. 6) That didn't work.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Ukraine in December. She spoke in Kiev to promote Ukraine's further integration into NATO and the European Union. “By working together as partners, I am confident that we can meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 21st century,” she said. (Interfax, Dec. 10) It's not happening.

Economic meltdown

When the countries of Eastern Europe had planned economies, the workers could count on a steady job with health care, paid vacations and a pension. Since the capitalists got back in at the beginning of the 1990s with promises of freedom and prosperity, all that has been lost.

Ukraine's economy contracted 15 percent last year, the steepest decline since 1994. The global capitalist financial crisis cut demand for its exports, such as steel and chemicals, and dried up investments. Its currency, the hryvnia, has slumped 42 percent against the dollar since the beginning of September 2008. Ukrainian gov-

ernment debt is the third-most expensive to insure in the world. (Business Week, Feb. 14)

Last year the International Monetary Fund refused to lend any more money to Ukraine after it raised wages and pensions. Yanukovich said during his campaign that he would keep those increases in place. But unemployment is rife and wages are low in Ukraine.

Ukrainians in the cities of Kiev and Cherkassy were interviewed in a Feb. 3 Financial Times video report, “Ukraine's Economic Chill.” One man said, “It's hard. I am not paid regularly. It's hard to find a job and so many people are looking.”

An older woman said, “Pensions are small. This is a crisis. It's affecting young people and us old pensioners.”

A younger woman said, “It's difficult. [In] these elections the struggle is for power, not for people.”

These desperate conditions have attracted investors. Neoliberal policies promote crushingly low-waged labor. Ukraine is a major manufacturer of passenger cars and adds non-factory parts to motor vehicles. But demand is down. This industry is failing, too.

Last year at this time, Ukrainian industrial output had shrunk by over a third, the worst drop in more than a decade. Machine building and mineral produc-

tion had both contracted by more than half year-on-year. Thousands of workers were put on unpaid leave. (Feb. 20, 2009, Reuters)

Last year Australian economic blogger Mike Whitney wrote, “Ukraine is teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary have all slipped into a low-grade depression. The countries that followed Washington's economic regimen have suffered the most. They haven't developed their consumer markets, demand is weak, and capital is scarce. Businesses are being forced to de-leverage to avoid default.”

Now, almost all the debts of the East European countries are owed to West European financial institutions: Austrian, German, Swedish, Greek, Italian and Belgian banks. They hold 74 percent of the entire \$5-trillion portfolio of loans to “emerging markets.” According to the IMF, these banks are five times more exposed to the meltdowns in the economies of the former socialist countries than are U.S. or Japanese banks, and they are 50 percent more leveraged.

Washington and Wall Street must accept that Ukraine is not joining NATO and is closer to Russia. Their color revolutions are fading, popular support is nonexistent, and their European bourgeois buddies are sinking in economic quicksand. □

EDITORIAL

Protesta del 20 de marzo

En el año desde que el Presidente Barack Obama llegó a ser el comandante en jefe de las fuerzas armadas de Estados Unidos, las ilusiones de millones de personas que ya no querían más guerras — tanto en el Medio Oriente como en otras partes — se han ido al suelo.

Tantas pancartas y marionetas que se llevaron en las manifestaciones contra la guerra antes de las elecciones, se enfocaron en la personalidad del Presidente George W. Bush como la razón de las brutales e ilegales invasiones y ocupaciones que sin piedad abatían a la resistencia en Irak y Afganistán. A Bush se le veía como listo pero obtuso — la guerra como un terrible error cometido por un hombre bruto, egoísta y sin principios, de horizontes estrechos. Y por supuesto, siempre estuvo la figura siniestra del vicepresidente Dick Cheney.

Ahora hay un equipo presidencial muy diferente en la Casa Blanca. Pero las guerras continúan como antes, aún si la justificación que se da es más refinada y la jerga patriótica no es tan obvia. De hecho, la administración democrática está poniendo más dinero aún en los bolsillos del complejo militar-industrial-banquero y ha ampliado sus guerras para incluir a Somalia, Pakistán, Yemen y una gigantesca armada alrededor de Irán.

Una elección nunca ha detenido una guerra. Fuerzas mucho más poderosas que unos simples oficiales electos están detrás de la gigantesca máquina del Pentágono. Debemos recordar que fue Richard Nixon, quien no era ningún liberal, el que finalmente presidió en la terminación de la Guerra de Vietnam. Como Bush, este criminal en la Casa Blanca había tratado todos los trucos para permanecer en el puesto y justificar la guerra. Pero durante su presidencia las manifestaciones estaban suplementadas con deserciones, rechazo a pelear en la guerra y acciones masivas militantes por jóvenes y soldados activos.

Los vietnamitas continuaron luchando heroicamente, el mundo estaba indignado y la clase gobernante de Estados Unidos finalmente decidió que no podía ganar. Entonces Nixon se convirtió en el “estadista” que presidió sobre la retirada final de las tropas.

Ha tomado mucho tiempo — tiempo en el que decenas de miles de personas han muerto — para que se entienda la realidad de que el cambio de administraciones no va a traer el fin de la guerra en Irak. En este período, los/as trabajadores/as en Estados Unidos han sido golpeados/as con la peor recesión capitalista desde la década de los treinta — una en la que una corta recuperación del mercado de valores no produjo ninguna recuperación del mercado de trabajos, a pesar de los colosales rescates para los bancos y las firmas financieras por parte de la administración de Obama.

Mientras las guerras continúan, los empleos en el sector público están desapareciendo conforme los estados enfrentan grandes recortes en sus presupuestos. A nivel federal, el presupuesto está siendo balanceado en las espaldas de los/as trabajadores/as aún cuando Obama libera a la máquina militar de cualquier congelamiento en sus gastos.

Las guerras en el exterior y la miseria económica aquí no pueden verse de manera separada. Son las dos caras de la misma moneda. En ambos casos, la clase depredadora de los explotadores súper ricos está usando el estado para proteger y garantizar sus monstruosas ganancias mientras espera que los/as trabajadores/as en uniforme o en ropa civil pongan su dinero y su vida en peligro.

Las manifestaciones contra la guerra que se han programado en Washington y otras partes para el 20 de marzo — el séptimo aniversario del asalto del Pentágono contra Irak — será un barómetro importante para saber si el movimiento ha podido recuperar el impulso en el nuevo ambiente político.

El Partido Workers World/ Mundo Obrero apoya las acciones del 20 de marzo y participará en éstas en todo el país. □

Ocupación estadounidense de Afganistán y Pakistán alcanza nuevo momento de la verdad

Por John Catalinotto

Las declaraciones tanto del mando de ocupación EEUU/OTAN como de los portavoces de la resistencia afgana, indican que se cierne un enfrentamiento militar en la provincia Helmand de Afganistán, concretamente en la zona de Marjah. Al mismo tiempo, la muerte de tres agentes de EEUU en Pakistán — ya sea de las Fuerzas Especiales o de los mercenarios “contratistas” — expone el aumento de la participación militar estadounidense en ese país de 170 millones de personas y que posee armas nucleares.

La administración de Obama anunció su intensificación de la ocupación de Afganistán el pasado otoño. Si el ataque sigue adelante y la resistencia se defiende y lucha, esta intensificación traerá un nuevo nivel de bajas en lo que el Pentágono llama “la región de Af-Pak”.

En Afganistán, las fuerzas de la OTAN y su gobierno títere de Afganistán, encabezado por el presidente Hamid Karzai, están llevando a cabo una ofensiva de dos filos.

Uno es la amenaza de un ataque en Marjah, previsto para mediados de febrero. Miles de tropas de la OTAN y de las tropas títeres afganas, encabezadas por los infantes de marina estadounidense que acaban de ser enviados a la zona, atacarían Marjah y expulsarían a la resistencia de su base más segura. Los reportes dicen que 2.000 de las 80.000 personas que residen en la llanura Marjah se han refugiado en la capital provincial Lashkar Gah, para evitar los enfrentamientos.

El General EEUU Stanley McChrystal dice que la ofensiva tiene como objetivo limpiar la región de los combatientes de la resistencia para que las fuerzas aliadas al gobierno de Karzai puedan tomar el control.

Según el Secretario de Defensa de EEUU Robert Gates, la OTAN ha dado a conocer el asalto “[para que] la gente sepa lo que viene con la esperanza de que el centro de los talibanes, o muchos de los talibanes, simplemente se retiren, y así tal vez habría menos confrontación”. (Reuters, 7 de febrero)

Los refugiados sin embargo, dicen que los guerrilleros han estado atrincherándose. “Los talibanes no van a dejar Marjah. Hemos visto cómo se están preparando. Están trayendo personas y armas. Sabemos que va a

haber un gran combate”, dijo Abdul Manan, un refugiado de la zona de Marjah. (Reuters, 7 de febrero)

Mulla Sharfuddin, comandante talibán en Helmand, dijo por teléfono a la Prensa Islámica Afgana “los talibanes no tienen miedo de la gran ofensiva planeada por las fuerzas extranjeras en Helmand. Estamos contentos de que los extranjeros salgan de sus bases y nuestros combatientes los atacarían”.

Sharfuddin, quien dijo que los talibanes cuentan con el apoyo popular, también negó la propaganda de EEUU-OTAN que acusa a la resistencia de sostenerse con fondos de la venta de drogas ilegales. “Los talibanes han prohibido el cultivo de drogas durante su gobierno”, dijo. (www.thenews.com.pk)

EEUU y Karzai intentan sobornar a los talibanes

El otro filo de la ofensiva es la supuesta oferta de Karzai de negociar un acuerdo, y al mismo tiempo ofrecer a las tropas de los talibanes puestos de trabajo. Hasta la fecha, Washington se ha negado a admitir que está tratando de negociar con los talibanes o con otras fuerzas de la resistencia. Es difícil concebir sin embargo, cómo Karzai podría perseguir una maniobra diplomática seria sin el apoyo de los EEUU ya que su régimen títere es totalmente dependiente de Washington para dinero, armas y protección armada.

El imperialismo estadounidense siempre buscará la manera de dividir las fuerzas que luchan contra él. Esto es especialmente cierto cuando se hace imposible que las fuerzas de ocupación de EEUU ganen militarmente. Así que el rumor de “dar a los combatientes talibanes puestos de trabajo”, implica que la ocupación está en problemas.

Tampoco es convincente el argumento de que la mayoría de los combatientes de la resistencia son simples mercenarios, que luchan por paga. Esto es especialmente dudoso cuando se aplica a los combatientes de la resistencia que participan en misiones suicidas.

Washington, por el contrario, se está volviendo más y más dependiente de las fuerzas mercenarias para luchar en sus guerras coloniales.

“Fuerzas especiales” caen en batalla en Pakistán

El escritor y periodista investiga-

dor Jeremy Scahill, que escribe sobre el creciente uso de mercenarios para llevar a cabo aventuras militares estadounidenses en Irak y Afganistán, escribió el 4 de febrero sobre la muerte de tres “fuerzas especiales” estadounidenses en el noroeste de Pakistán. (www.thenation.com)

“Los soldados murieron el miércoles en el Bajo Dir cuando su convoy fue alcanzado por un coche bomba en lo que parecía ser un ataque dirigido contra los americanos. Según el Comando Central, los soldados estadounidenses estaban en el país en una misión para entrenar las fuerzas fronterizas paquistaníes. El capitán Jack Hanzlik, portavoz del Comando Central de Estados Unidos dijo que hay cerca de 200 miembros del personal militar de EEUU en Pakistán”. Cerca de 60 a 100 de estos son “entrenadores”.

Scahill sostiene que el aumento en la presencia de estos “entrenadores” es generalmente precursor del desembarco de un mayor número de tropas regulares de EEUU. También señala que gran parte de la labor de formación se lleva a cabo por tropas mercenarias. En Pakistán hay operarios de Blackwater (o como se llama ahora, Xe) que trabajan como subcontratistas de una empresa pakistaní, la Kestral Logistics.

Un portavoz paquistaní del Talibán, Tariq Azim, también habló sobre los mercenarios: “Sabemos los movimientos de los infantes de marina estadounidenses y de Blackwater y hemos preparado ataques de bombas suicidas para ir tras ellos”. (The Nation, 4 de febrero)

El aumento de la intervención estadounidense en la región está provocando cambios también entre las fuerzas antiimperialistas. En enero hubo en Pakistán una reunión de diferentes tendencias de la izquierda que por años han estado divididas, pero que ahora han llegado a un acuerdo para fundar un “Frente Antiimperialista”.

En Afganistán, la propaganda estadounidense llama a todos en la resistencia “Talibán”. Otros observadores señalan sin embargo, que mientras el Talibán es la principal fuerza organizada en la resistencia afgana, hay muchos otros envueltos. No todas estas fuerzas son fundamentalistas y algunos son incluso seculares y marxistas. No son ahora un frente de liberación unido, pero todos quieren echar a los EEUU y la OTAN fuera de Afganistán y de toda la región. □

Libertad para los cinco cubanos



Libertad para los cinco cubanos: Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez y Fernando González Llort.